DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 226 463 EA 015 408

AUTHOR Gray, Sandra T.
TITLE Managing School Volunteers--Eight Keys to Success.
PUB DATE Jul 82
NOTE 18p.; Paper presented at the International Conference for Parent/Citizen Involvement in Schools (Salt Lake City, UT, July 1982).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Administrator Role; Cooperative Planning; Elementary Secondary Education; Guidelines; Program Administration; Program Evaluation; Publicity; *School Business Relationship; School Community Relationship; School Policy; Urban Schools; *Volunteers

ABSTRACT

The present is a good time for school-community collaboration, and the National School Volunteer Program in Alexandria (Virginia) is helping by providing assistance and training for schools' volunteer programs. Eight principles characterize effective volunteer programs, including (1) strong top-level support from superintendents and school boards; (2) formal written policies, to help keep volunteer programs in the budget; (3) a manager or coordinator of volunteers; (4) people (rather than money), especially from local businesses; (5) many options for volunteers to choose from; (6) systematic and collaborative planning, with teachers involved; (7) promotion with gusto, especially through the mass media; and (8) evaluation, built in from the start and used for program improvement. Many of the high schools given recognition awards by the Ford Foundation had effective volunteer programs, including schools in Salt Lake City (Utah), Tulsa (Oklahoma), Columbus (Ohio), and Seattle (Washington). School-business partnerships, such as through adopt-a-school programs, have proven successful in such places as Los Angeles and Oakland (California), Houston and Dallas (Texas), Montgomery County (Maryland), Detroit (Michigan), Memphis (Tennessee), and New Orleans (Louisiana). (RW)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED226463

MANAGING SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS--EIGHT KEYS TO SUCCESS

presented at

THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR

PARENT/CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOLS

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Sandra T. Gray

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Sandra T. Gray
Executive Director
National School Volunteer Program
July 1982

EA 015 408

MANAGING SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS — EIGHT KEYS TO SUCCESS

I AM ESPECIALLY PLEASED TO BE SPEAKING IN SALT LAKE CITY, WHERE THE SCHOOL SYSTEM ILLUSTRATES THE PRINCIPLES OF EFFECTIVE DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOL VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS THAT I AM ABOUT TO DISCUSS.

WE IN THE NATIONAL SCHOOL VOLUNTEER PROGRAM CONSIDER PLACES LIKE SALT LAKE CITY TO BE MODELS FOR TAPPING COMMUNITY RESOURCES — DIVERSE, TALENTED INDIVIDUALS AND GROUPS OF PEOPLE COMMITTED TO HELPING LOCAL SCHOOLS IMPROVE THEIR QUALITY. WE KNOW THAT MANY SCHOOLS HAVE BEEN IMPROVING IN RECENT YEARS, CONTRARY TO WHAT THE PUBLIC TOO OFTEN BELIEVES. WE HAVE WITNESSED THE IMPROVEMENTS FIRST HAND AND HAVE PARTICIPATED IN THEM. WE BELIEVE THAT THE VITALITY OF PUBLIC SCHOOLING DEPENDS UPON ACTIVE PARTICIPATION OF CITIZENS, (SENIOR CITIZENS, STUDENTS AND ESPECIALLY PARENTS), BUT INCREASINGLY THERE ARE LARGE NUMBERS OF COMPANY EMPLOYEES WILLING TO VOLUNTEER IN SCHOOLS. WHO, THEN, DO WE CLASSIFY AS A VOLUNTEER? ANY RESOURCE MADE AVAILABLE TO THE SCHOOL SYSTEM THAT THE SCHOOL SYSTEM DOES NOT PAY FOR.

UNLIKE THE TURBULENT PERIOD OF THE SIXTIES AND SEVENTIES, THE TIME IS RIGHT TO FOSTER GENUINE COLLABORATION BETWEEN SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY PEOPLE. WE HAVE FOUND THAT NEW TYPES OF SCHOOL-AND-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS OFFER MUTUAL REWARDS. IN THE SIXTIES AND SEVENTIES, THE REWARDS OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN

SCHOOL AFFAIRS WERE OFTEN MUDDLED, AND BY NO MEANS ALWAYS MUTUAL. TOO OFTEN THE ARRANGEMENTS WERE HAPHAZARDLY CONCEIVED AND CARRIED OUT. PEOPLE WORKED AT CROSS PURPOSES AMID A TANGLE OF HIDDEN AGENDAS — EVEN WHEN EVERYONE WAS WELL-INTENTIONED. SOME TEACHERS FELT THREATENED — WOULD VOLUNTEERS BE USED TO REPLACE RATHER THAN SUPPORT TEACHERS? PARENTS SOMETIMES TRIED TO INFLUENCE THE CURRICULUM OR WERE SEEN AS SPIES. SOMETIMES ADMINISTRATORS USED VOLUNTEERS TO PROMOTE THEIR OWN PET IDEAS OR TO MAKE END RUNS AROUND THE CENTRAL ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS.

THESE PROBLEMS HAVE DIMINISHED TODAY, PARTLY BECAUSE, THANK GOODNESS, WE DO LEARN FROM EXPERIENCE. SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL SYSTEMS CAN LEARN FROM ONE ANOTHER ABOUT EFFECTIVE WAYS TO ENLIST VOLUNTEERS, AND IT IS TIME TO BEGIN SHARING THE CENTRAL LESSONS OF THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS.

THE NATIONAL SCHOOL VOLUNTEER PROGRAM IS A NON-PROFIT EDUCATION ASSOCIATION BASED IN ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA, JUST OUTSIDE WASHINGTON, D.C. WE PROVIDE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND WE TRAIN TEAMS OF PEOPLE TO BEGIN OR EXPAND SCHOOL VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS. WE CONDUCT WHAT WE CALL ACADEMIES — EXTENDED WORKSHOPS FOR SEVERAL TEAMS FROM DIFFERENT SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL SYSTEMS TO EXCHANGE VIEWPOINTS AS THEY ARE BEING TRAINED. A TYPICAL TEAM MIGHT CONSIST OF A SYSTEM-WIDE ADMINISTRATOR, A COORDINATOR OF SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS, A MEMBER OF THE SCHOOL BOARD AND ANYONE

ELSE THEY MAY CHOOSE. SUCH AS A REPRESENTATIVE FROM A BUSINESS SECTOR INTERESTED IN HELPING OR THE DIRECTOR OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT.

MY THEME TODAY — "Y'ALL COME!" AND WAIT AND SEE WHAT HAPPENS IS OUT. SCHOOL VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS HAVE EVOLVED RAPIDLY DURING THE PAST FEW YEARS. IT IS NO LONGER ENOUGH FOR SCHOOL OFFICIALS TO TELL POTENTIAL VOLUNTEERS, "Y'ALL COME!" AND SEE WHAT HAPPENS. THERE ARE TOO MANY COMPETING FORCES FOR THE TIME AND ENERGIES OF VOLUNTEERS. AND VOLUNTEERS WILL NOT STAY ACTIVE VERY LONG IF THEY DO NOT FEEL GENUINELY INVOLVED AND FEEL REWARDED FOR THEIR EFFORTS. SCHOOL VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS, LIKE EVERYTHING ELSE THAT IS WORTHWHILE IN EDUCATION, MUST BE WELL DESIGNED AND EXPERTLY MANAGED.

EIGHT PRINCIPLES CHARACTERIZE EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS SUCH AS THE ONE IN SALT LAKE CITY.

FIRST - <u>STRONG TOP LEVEL SUPPORT.</u> THE SALT LAKE CITY PROGRAM ENJOYS STRONG TOP LEVEL SUPPORT. BOTH THE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS AND THE SCHOOL BOARD STRONGLY ENDORSE AND VOCALLY PROMOTE AND RECOGNIZE SCHOOL VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES.

THE SECOND PRINCIPLE IS <u>WRITTEN FORMAL POLICY</u> SUPPORT. SCHOOL VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS COST MONEY — FUNDS THAT ARE REPAID IN MANY WAYS SEVERAL TIMES OVER, BUT HARD DOLLARS NEVERTHELESS. THESE FUNDS ARE ESSENTIAL FOR SUSTAINING PROGRAMS, ESPECIALLY IN

TIMES OF DRASTIC BUDGET REDUCTIONS. WHEN SCHOOL OFFICIALS TAKE A HARD LOOK AT THE WHEAT AND CHAFF IN THE SCHOOL BUDGET, IT IS CRUCIAL FOR A FORMAL AND WRITTEN RATIONALE — AND HARD EVIDENCE OF RESULTS — TO ACT AS A FOUNDATION FOR CONTINUING SUPPORT OF KEY PEOPLE TO MANAGE THE VOLUNTEER EFFORTS.

THIRDLY, A MANAGER. SOMEONE MUST BE ASSIGNED TO MANAGE SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS. THIS PERSON SHOULD BE PLACED AT A HIGH LEVEL WITH DIRECT ACCESS TO THE SUPERINTENDENT, SUCH AS A DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT. SALT LAKE CITY'S SUPERINTENDENT, DR. DONALD THOMAS, IS NOT ONLY A VOCAL ADVOCATE OF SCHOOL VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS; HE HAS ALSO ASSIGNED A SUPERB MANAGER, GENE BERRY, IN A HIGHLY VISIBLE ROLE.

FOURTHLY, PEOPLE. THE EMPHASIS SHOULD BE ON INVOLVING PEOPLE RATHER THAN ON FUNDRAISING. WHEN LOCAL BUSINESSES FORM PARTNERSHIPS WITH SCHOOLS BY RELEASING OR LENDING EMPLOYEES TO PERFORM SERVICES, THEY BUILD LASTING PERSONAL COMMITMENTS TO IMPROVING SCHOOLS IN WAYS THAT MONEY CANNOT DO.

OF COURSE, IT COSTS MONEY FOR COMPANIES TO RELEASE STAFF DURING THE WORK DAY, BUT THE DIVIDENDS IN EMPLOYEE MORALE AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS ARE USUALLY WORTH THE INVESTMENT. IN MEMPHIS, EMPLOYEES IN A COMPANY NEAR AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL BEGAN A SMALL TUTORIAL PROGRAM BEFORE WORK. IT ENDED EACH MORNING AT 8:45 SO THAT THE TUTORS COULD WALK TO WORK AND BE ON TIME. THE PROGRAM BECAME EXTREMELY SUCCESSFUL IN A SHORT TIME

BECAUSE THE TUTORS' DAYS ALWAYS STARTED POSITIVELY. THEY COULD SEE THE RESULTS OF THEIR EFFORTS, THEY WERE APPRECIATED, AND THEY ENJOYED THE KIDS AND THE SCHOOL STAFF. SOON THEY FELT GENUINE BELONGING. NOW THERE IS A LONG WAITING LIST FOR THE TUTORIAL PROGRAM, AND THE COMPANY HAS "ADOPTED" THE SCHOOL.

A FIFTH CRITICAL ELEMENT IS OPTIONS FOR VOLUNTEERS. AS PEOPLE CONSIDER WHETHER AND HOW THEY WOULD LIKE TO BECOME INVOLVED IN A SCHOOL, THEY NEED OPTIONS: WHAT SCHOOL TO HELP, WHAT PEOPLE TO WORK WITH, SCHEDULES, AND TYPES OF ACTIVITIES. LOS ANGELES, WHICH HAS A WIDE RANGE OF POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES FOR BUSINESS PEOPLE SENIOR CITIZENS THROUGH THE DOVES PROGRAM, STUDENTS AND PARENTS TO JOIN, IN PROGRAMS COVERING 710 SQUARE MILES. THE KEY TO SUCCESS IS STRONG COORDINATION, AND MANY ALTERNATIVES. I UNDERSTAND THE LATEST SURVEY REVEALED MORE THAN 20,000 VOLUNTEERS ARE INVOLVED WITH THIS UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT.

THE SIXTH PRINCIPLE IS COLLABORATIVE PLANNING. THE PEOPLE — ESPECIALLY CLASSROOM TEACHERS — WHO ARE DIRECTLY AFFECTED BY SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS MUST HAVE A VOICE IN PROGRAM DECISIONS FROM THE START. THE WAY TO COUNTERACT FEARS THAT VOLUNTEERS WILL BE USED TO REPLACE STAFF IS NOT TO ISSUE FORMAL ASSURANCES, BUT TO INVOLVE TEACHERS IN PLANNING THE PROGRAM. CLEAR UNDERSTANDINGS ABOUT PURPOSES, PROCEDURES, AND METHODS OF ASSESSMENT REQUIRE AMPLE PLANNING TIME AND STRONG, SENSITIVE COORDINATION. MANY A PROGRAM CONCEIVED WITH THE BEST OF

INTENTIONS BY CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATORS HAS FAILED BECAUSE LOCAL SCHOOL PEOPLE WERE NOT INVOLVED IN EARLY PLANNING. AT THE SAME TIME, PROGRAMS WHICH SEEMED SMALL AND INSIGNIFICANT — SUCH AS A FEW TUTORS MEETING KIDS BEFORE SCHOOL — HAVE GROWN TO HAVE A MAJOR IMPACT ON SCHOOLS BECAUSE OF EFFECTIVE PLANNING AND MONITORING FROM THE OUTSET.

THE SEVENTH PRINCIPLE IS PROMOTION WITH GUSTO. THE FADED MIMEOGRAPH SHEET AND THE BRIEF NOTICE IN THE NEWSLETTER ARE NO LONGER ADEQUATE WAYS TO REACH PEOPLE. TELEVISION, RADIO, DIRECT MAIL, PHONE-A-THONS, AND PERSONAL CONTACTS THROUGH COMPANY OFFICIALS ARE A FEW DEVICES NOW BEING USED TO ENLIST VOLUNTEERS. RECOGNITION AND AWARDS FOR VOLUNTEERS ARE ESSENTIAL FOR A SUCCESSFUL PROGRAM.

FINALLY, EVALUATION. PROGRAM EVALUATION MUST BE BUILT IN FROM THE START AND PUT TO USE. PROGRAMS SUCH AS ADOPT-A-SCHOOL IN OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA HAVE LEARNED FROM THEIR EXPERIENCE HOW TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LOCAL SCHOOL-BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS OVER A SEVEN-YEAR PERIOD. KAISER ALUMINUM AND CHEMICAL CORPORATION, WHICH ADOPTED OAKLAND HIGH SCHOOL, BEGAN A PROGRAM INVOLVING THE LOCAL UNIVERSITY AS WELL AS THE SCHOOL SYSTEM IN A CURRICULUM REDESIGN PROGRAM INCLUDING WORK-STUDY, CALLED "SUCCESS ON THE MOVE." IT EXPERIENCED PROBLEMS BECAUSE IT TRIED AT FIRST TO DO TOO MUCH TO FAST, BUT EVALUATION HELPED IT TO REFINE THE MODEL, WHICH IS NOW BEING REPLICATED IN NINE OTHER CITIES.

EVALUATIONS NEED NOT BE CUMBERSOME. KEEPING RECORDS ON HOW MANY PEOPLE STAY IN A VOLUNTEER PROGRAM OVER A FULL SCHOOL YEAR OFFERS ONE SIMPLE AND VERY REVEALING MEASURE OF HOLDING POWER. PERIODIC SURVEYS OF PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE SCHOOLS ARE ALSO HELPFUL. IN MANY WAYS, THE MOST SERIOUS PROBLEM THAT SCHOOLS FACE TODAY IS A DECLINE IN PUBLIC CONFIDENCE BASED ON INACCURATE PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOOLS — PERCEPTIONS ROOTED IN THE PROBLEMS OF THE SIXTIES AND SEVENTIES.

RECENTLY A PROGRAM CONDUCTED BY THE FORD FOUNDATION CONFIRMED OUR SENSE THAT CITY HIGH SCHOOLS HAVE BEEN IMPROVING. THE SCHOOLS ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE FORD PROGRAM IN 40 CITIES WERE COMPREHENSIVE HIGH SCHOOLS SERVING AT LEAST 30% STUDENTS FROM LOW-INCOME FAMILIES — THOSE URBAN HIGH SCHOOLS THAT ATTRACT SO MUCH CRITICISM TODAY. THE CONSULTANTS WHO EXAMINED THESE SCHOOLS FOUND THAT THE CLIMATES WERE HARMONIOUS AND ORDERLY, THAT TEACHERS AND STUDENTS FROM VARIED RACIAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUNDS RELATED WELL, AND THAT ACHIEVEMENT WAS STEADILY INCREASING.

SOUTH HIGH SCHOOL IN SALT LAKE CITY IS ONE OF 110 SCHOOLS ACROSS THE COUNTRY THAT RECEIVED FORD CITY HIGH SCHOOL RECOGNITION AWARDS IN MAY. ONE OF THE FACTORS IN THE IMPROVEMENT OF SOUTH HIGH HAS BEEN CONTRIBUTIONS OF EMPLOYEES ON RELEASED TIME FROM THEIR COMPANIES.

ANOTHER CITY IN THE PROGRAM WAS TULSA, OKLAHOMA, WHERE MCLAIN HIGH SCHOOL WON A NATIONAL AWARD. IN TULSA, 3,500 VOLUNTEERS WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR MAINTAINING GOOD SCHOOL CLIMATE CITY WIDE. THE ATTENDANCE FIGURES CITY WIDE WERE 92 PERCENT, AND THERE WERE EXTREMELY LOW RATES OF VANDALISM AND ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE.

FIVE SCHOOLS IN COLUMBUS, OHIO RECEIVED AWARDS. CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT IN SUPPORTING LOCAL SCHOOLS IN COLUMBUS HAS BEEN OUTSTANDING. COLUMBUS HAD SUFFERED FROM DECLINING PUBLIC CONFIDENCE AND DISTRESS OVER COURT-ORDERED DESEGREGATION TO THE POINT THAT LOCAL SCHOOL TAXES HAD NOT INCREASED FOR YEARS. THE SCHOOLS LAUNCHED A MAJOR PROMOTIONAL EFFORT MANAGED BY A MARKETING EXECUTIVE ON LOAN FROM A LOCAL FIRM. THE CAMPAIGN STIMULATED WIDESPREAD PARENT, CITIZEN AND BUSINESS ACTIVITIES TO RAISE TAX REVENUES. THEY PASSED A TAX LEVY THAT INCREASED THE SCHOOL BUDGET BY $25 MILLION ANNUALLY.

IN SEATTLE, WHERE CHIEF SEALTH HIGH SCHOOL ALSO WON AN AWARD, CITIZEN ACTIVISTS HAVE FORMED A NON PROFIT CORPORATION LOCATED IN THE LOCAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE. IT IS CALLED PIPE, WHICH STANDS FOR PRIVATE INITIATIVES IN PUBLIC EDUCATION. PIPE COORDINATES A BROAD RANGE OF SCHOOL-BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS AS A WAY TO ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO SHARE SKILLS, TALENTS, AND TIME WITH STUDENTS AND TEACHERS. FOR INSTANCE, THE SEATTLE BANK RELEASES 300 EMPLOYEES TWO HOURS A WEEK FOR TUTORING IN THE SCHOOLS. PIPE IS FUNDED THROUGH COMPANY CONTRIBUTIONS, TYPICALLY $2,000 FOR

FULL PARTNERSHIPS. THE TWELVE ORIGINAL FOUNDING COMPANIES ARE PAIRED WITH TEN HIGH SCHOOLS, AND TWO FUNDING COMPANIES ARE CALLED PARTNERS AT LARGE.

PIPE WAS CAREFULLY PLANNED IN LIGHT OF SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY NEEDS. SEATTLE'S DIVERSIFIED METROPOLITAN AREA COULD ACCOMMODATE ONE-TO-ONE SCHOOL-COMPANY PARTNERSHIPS THAT PROVIDED COMPANIES WITH A SENSE OF BELONGING, TRUE IDENTIFICATION WITH THE SCHOOL. MOST IMPORTANTLY, PARTNERSHIPS HAVE BEEN CAREFULLY MANAGED AND CULTIVATED.

A BUSINESS COORDINATOR FROM EACH INDIVIDUAL PARTNERSHIP ACTS AS A BROKER OF RESOURCES AND SERVICES. PROPOSED PROJECTS IN SCHOOLS MUST UNDERGO REVIEW AND APPROVAL TO ASSURE QUALITY AND MUTUAL COMMITMENT BY THE PARTNERS. DECISIONS TO IMPLEMENT PROPOSALS BY COMPANY PARTNERS AT LARGE, WHICH WORK WITH MORE THAN ONE SCHOOL, ARE APPROVED ONLY UPON THE FORMAL REQUEST OF THE SCHOOL.

THE EMPHASIS ON PEOPLE RATHER THAN MONEY IS CLEAR IN SEATTLE AS ELSEWHERE. PIPE, FOR INSTANCE, INCLUDES A MEMBERSHIP CLASSIFICATION CALLED "CONTRIBUTING ORGANIZATION." THIS SIGNIFIES THAT A COMPANY OR OTHER ORGANIZATION IS CONTRIBUTING FINANCIALLY TO PIPE BUT IS NOT YET PROVIDING THE MOST IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION — PEOPLE.

THE PIPE MODEL ILLUSTRATES THE GROWING UNDERSTANDING THAT SCHOOL-BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS AND RELATED VOLUNTEER MODELS CAN FALL APART IF THEY ARE POORLY DESIGNED AND MANAGED. IT IS NO SECRET THAT BROAD PROGRAMS SUCH AS ADOPT-A-SCHOOL HAVE BY NO MEANS SUCCEEDED ACROSS THE COUNTRY. SOME HAVE EVEN SPARKED LOCAL CONTROVERSY, ESPECIALLY WHEN COMPANY INTENTIONS AND SCHOOL GOALS DO NOT MATCH. BUT WHERE THEY DO SUCCEED, AS IN SEATTLE AND OAKLAND AND MEMPHIS, AND DALLAS, AND LOS ANGELES THERE IS ALWAYS STRONG MANAGEMENT AND COMMITMENT ON THE PART OF THE PEOPLE PARTICIPATING IN THE PROGRAM.

IN LOS ANGELES THE CENTRAL OFFICE COORDINATOR OFFERS ASSISTANCE AND ENCOURAGEMENT BUT STRESSES THAT THE PROGRAM SUCCEEDS BECAUSE LOCAL PEOPLE WORK OUT THEIR OWN BEST WAYS OF WORKING TOGETHER. ADOPT-A-SCHOOL IN LOS ANGELES BEGAN WITH A CAREFULLY STRUCTURED EFFORT BY ATLANTIC RICHFIELD TO ASSIST A LOCAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL. BUT ONE ADOPTION OCCURRED VERY INFORMALLY, WHEN THE PRESIDENT OF A LOCAL SAVINGS BANK VOLUNTEERED TO TEACH HIS HOBBY OF MAKING STAINED GLASS TO CHILDREN IN A NEIGHBORHOOD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL. HIS EXPERIENCE LED EVENTUALLY TO THE ADOPTION OF THE SCHOOL BY THE BANK.

WE HAVE SEEN THIS THEME REPEATEDLY: ONE GOOD EXPERIENCE LEADS TO ANOTHER. WHEN PEOPLE BECOME INVOLVED, THEY COMMIT THEIR PERSONAL ENERGIES. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES, SUCH AS FUNDS AND EQUIPMENT, FOLLOW.

IN HOUSTON, THE LOCAL BUSINESS AND INDUSTRIAL COMMUNITY LED PLANNING OF THE NATIONALLY FAMOUS HIGH SCHOOL FOR ENGINEERING PROFESSIONS, A SCHOOL-WITHIN-A SCHOOL — BOOKER T. WASHINGTON HIGH. THIS PROGRAM WAS DESIGNED TO ENABLE MINORITIES AND YOUNG WOMEN TO DEVELOP THE ADVANCED SCIENCE AND MATH SKILLS REQUIRED FOR SUCCESS IN ENGINEERING AND OTHER SCIENTIFIC. CAREERS TAUGHT IN COLLEGE. THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT HAD NO CATEGORY OF FUNDS TO CREATE SUCH A PROGRAM BECAUSE IT WAS AIMED AT PREVENTION RATHER THAN REMEDIATION.

LOCAL INDUSTRIES AND FOUNDATIONS CONTRIBUTED PLANNING AND START-UP FUNDS. THE MOST IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTIONS, THOUGH, HAVE BEEN EXPERTISE AND INVOLVEMENT OF COMPANY EMPLOYEES IN REFINING CURRICULUM, UPGRADING EQUIPMENT, AND PROMOTING THE PROGRAM IN THE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS. THESE VOLUNTEERS UNDERSTAND PRACTICAL REALITIES IN THEIR PROFESSIONS. FOR INSTANCE, THEY KNEW THAT ENGINEERS AS A GROUP TEND TO BE POOR COMMUNICATORS. COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS ARE THEREFORE CENTRAL IN A CURRICULUM THAT WOULD OTHERWISE HAVE BEEN WEIGHTED ENTIRELY TOWARD THE HARD SCIENCES. RESEARCH ALSO SHOWS THAT ENGINEERS ARE RETURNING TO SCHOOL TO LEARN COMPUTER PROGRAMMING. THE CURRICULUM THEREFORE INCLUDES COURSES IN COMPUTER LANGUAGES AND PROGRAMMING TECHNIQUES.

THE CONSTRUCTION TRADES FOUNDATION IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND HAS OVER 400 STUDENTS PARTICIPATING IN DESIGNING AND

BUILDING HOMES THAT HAVE SOLD FOR OVER $200,000 APIECE. THEY ARE NOW FINISHING THEIR SIXTH LUXURY HOME AND ARE EXPANDING THE PROGRAM TO BUILD IN ADJOINING COMMUNITIES. THE VOLUNTEER TEAM IS COMPRISED OF A BANKER, ACCOUNTANT, ATTORNEY, REALTOR, BUILDER, ARCHITECT, INTERIOR DESIGNER, BUILDING INSPECTOR, AND EDUCATORS. THE GROUP EXPANDS YEARLY AS POSITIONS ON THE BOARD ROTATE. THE PROGRAM INCLUDES MORE THAN THE DESIGN AND BUILDING OF HOUSES: MARKETING, INTERIOR DESIGN, AND LANDSCAPING PROGRAMS HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED AS WELL. A SPIN-OFF OF THIS EXCELLENT PROGRAM HAS BEEN THE AUTOMOTIVE TRADES FOUNDATION. STUDENTS BUY, REPAIR AND COMPLETELY RESTORE CARS FOR RE-SALE ON THEIR USED CAR LOT. THESE CARS SELL FOR PRICES AS HIGH AS $6,000.

THE PROGRAM MODELS THAT WORK HAVE EMERGED GRADUALLY IN THE PAST FEW YEARS ACROSS THE COUNTRY. USUALLY THEY ARE SMALL AND HAVE NOT GENERALLY SOUGHT THE LIMELIGHT — MAINLY BECAUSE THEY REFLECT LOCAL INTEREST AND COMMITMENT RATHER THAN NATIONAL ATTENTION.

LET'S REVIEW THE CRITICAL PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING THESE MODELS:

FIRST, TOP LEVEL SUPPORT FROM THE SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT AND THE BOARD OF EDUCATION. DETROIT'S SUPERINTENDENT, ARTHUR JEFFERSON, APPROACHED THE DETROIT BUSINESS COMMUNITY IN 1977 TO HELP THE SCHOOLS CONNECT ITS YOUNG PEOPLE WITH THE WORLD OF

WORK IN THE PRIVATE BUSINESS SECTOR. IN RESPONSE, SEVERAL OUTSTANDING PROGRAM MODELS HAVE EMERGED. FOR INSTANCE, THE BURROUGHS CORPORATION PROVIDES VOLUNTEERING INSTRUCTORS FOR A SCHOOL-BASED YEAR-LONG PROGRAM TO TRAIN 24 HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS FOR HIGH PAYING JOBS IN THE COMPUTER INDUSTRY UPON GRADUATION. THESE JOBS IN COMPUTER MAINTENANCE PAY WAGES AS HIGH AS $13,000 TO START, AND MOST PEOPLE WHO ENTER THEM ARE EXPECTED TO HAVE AT LEAST TWO YEARS OF TECHNICAL TRAINING AT THE COLLEGE LEVEL.

IN HOUSTON, SUPERINTENDENT BILLY REAGAN LAUNCHED OPERATION FAILSAFE TO INVOLVE ALL PARENTS OF SCHOOL CHILDREN, ALONG WITH LOCAL BUSINESS PEOPLE AND OTHER CITIZENS, TO ASSIST SCHOOLS. HOUSTON CURRENTLY HAS MORE THAN 10,000 VOLUNTEERS, 75% OF THE PARENTS ARE INVOLVED. 80% OF THE STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT SCORES IN THE EARLY GRADES THROUGH JUNIOR HIGH ARE AT OR ABOVE NATIONAL NORMS ON STANDARDIZED TESTS. ATTENDANCE INCREASED TO BRING AN ADDITIONAL $1 MILLION IN STATE AVERAGE DAILY ATTENDANCE FUNDS TO HOUSTON.

SECOND: TOP LEVEL LEGITIMACY THROUGH POLICY AND ADEQUATE FUNDING. THE DALLAS SCHOOL SYSTEM, WHICH HAS ONE OF THE LONGEST-RUNNING AND EXTENSIVE SCHOOL-BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMS IN THE COUNTRY, HAS SUCH EXPLICIT POLICY. IT IS ALSO SUPPORTED BY TOP LEVEL ADMINISTRATIVE COORDINATION AND FUNDS.

THIRD: STRONG COORDINATION AND MANAGEMENT BY SOMEONE WHO HAS A SPECIAL BILINGUAL TALENT — THAT IS, THE MANAGER MUST BE ABLE TO SPEAK THE LANGUAGE OF SCHOOL PEOPLE AND THE LANGUAGE OF THE AVERAGE CITIZEN. AS A COORDINATOR IN OAKLAND EXPLAINS, "SCHOOL PEOPLE TALK PROCESS, WHILE BUSINESS PEOPLE TALK PRODUCT. THEY SPEAK TWO DIFFERENT LANGUAGES." OVER THE YEARS, OAKLAND'S SCHOOL PEOPLE AND BUSINESS PEOPLE HAVE LEARNED TO COMMUNICATE —WITH HELP.

FOURTH: AN EMPHASIS ON COMMITMENT OF PEOPLE RATHER THAN FINANCIAL RESOURCES. THE INVOLVEMENT OF MEMPHIS COMPANY EMPLOYEES IN SCHOOLS HAS BEGUN TO SHIFT THE TRADITIONALLY NEGATIVE PUBLIC OPINION OF SCHOOLS. PEOPLE INQUIRING ABOUT REAL ESTATE IN MEMPHIS ARE NOW ASKING ABOUT PUBLIC AS WELL AS PRIVATE SCHOOLS BECAUSE THEY HAVE HEARD GOOD NEWS FROM PEOPLE IN COMPANIES.

FIFTH: PROVIDE PLENTY OF OPTIONS SO THAT VOLUNTEERS DO NOT FEEL THAT THEY MUST EITHER BUY INTO A RIGIDLY DEFINED PROGRAM OR SIT ON THE SIDELINES. AN ARRAY OF CHOICES RESPONDS TO THE WIDE RANGE OF INTERESTS AMONG VOLUNTEERS. AS WAYNE CARLSON, DIRECTOR OF LOS ANGELES' ADOPT-A-SCHOOL PROGRAM EXPLAINS, A SCHOOL SYSTEM MUST APPROACH VOLUNTEERS — ESPECIALLY THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY — WITH MORE THAN ONE SUITCASE.

SIXTH: SYSTEMATIC PLANNING. PLANNING TIME DEPENDS ON THE COST, SIZE, AND COMPLEXITY OF THE ENVISIONED PROGRAM. CAREFUL INVESTIGATION OF EXPERIENCES ELSEWHERE REVEAL CRUCIAL LESSONS. FOR INSTANCE, MOST EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS BEGIN SMALL, HAVE SPECIFIC, MEASURABLE GOALS, AND EXPAND GRADUALLY AFTER CAREFUL EVALUATION. SCHOOL PERSONNEL IN THESE PROGRAMS TYPICALLY VOLUNTEER TO BE INVOLVED; THEY ARE NOT ASSIGNED.

SEVENTH: PROMOTE WITH GUSTO. RECOGNITION AND AWARDS ARE ESSENTIAL. SOME GROUPS, LIKE PIPE, HAVE PROFESSIONAL LOOKING REGULAR NEWSLETTERS. SOME PLACES, SUCH AS DALLAS, MAKE EXCELLENT USE OF BUSINESS EXECUTIVES TO CREATE A NETWORK OF PEOPLE TO RECRUIT VOLUNTEERS IN COMPANIES.

EIGHTH: BUILD IN EVALUATION FROM THE START AND USE ITS RESULTS TO IMPROVE YOUR PROGRAM. NEW ORLEANS COMPANIES DEVELOPED AN EVALUATION OF THEIR PARTNERSHIPS THAT PRODUCED IMPORTANT SUGGESTIONS FOR CHANGING THE ROLES AND EXPECTATIONS THAT SCHOOLS AND COMPANIES HAD OF ONE ANOTHER AND FOR IMPROVING THE LEVEL OF COMMITMENT IN SCHOOLS AND COMPANIES TO THE PROGRAM. IN OAKLAND, WRITTEN CONTRACTS FOR SCHOOL-BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS ARE REGULARLY ASSESSED AT ALL LEVELS. CONTRACTS ARE NOT RENEWED UNTIL ALL GROUPS HAVE WORKED OUT THE BUGS IN THEIR RELATIONSHIP.

THERE ARE ABOUT TEN MILLION VOLUNTEERS HELPING THE NATION'S PUBLIC SCHOOLS YEARLY. THERE COULD BE MANY MORE PEOPLE INVOLVED IF POTENTIAL VOLUNTEERS WERE RECRUITED MORE SYSTEMATICALLY. IN ADDITION, THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF THOSE ALREADY INVOLVED COULD MULTIPLY IF THE EIGHT PRINCIPLES I HAVE DISCUSSED ARE APPLIED. NOW THAT WE HAVE FINALLY LEARNED HOW TO MOVE BEYOND SAYING "Y'ALL COME," IT IS TIME TO PUT THESE LESSONS INTO PRACTICE.